# WHEN LINCOLN SPOKE

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THERE is no piece of composition more familiar to the American people than what is commonly called the "Gettysburg Address" of Abraham Lincoln. It contains only two hundred and seventy-one words; but neither in the Declaration of Independence, nor in the orations of Webster is there any passage that equals it in the profound and abiding impression which it has made on the national mind.

In the public schools for many years it has been recited by the pupils as a lesson in both patriotism and eloquence. It has been quoted by public men and by newspapers on countless occasions. More than once it has even been compared in its simplicity and yet sublimity of thought to the Sermon on the Mount. Nor do these eulogies of its merits proceed solely from his own countrymen. The estimate by which it is held by men of letters in England is equally high as it has been cited time and again as one of the finest examples of modern eloquence in the English tongue.

The occasion which caused the production of this masterpiece was the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery at Gettysburg on the 19th of November, 1863, four months and a half after the great battle. About a fortnight previous to the event Mr. Lincoln received an invitation from the commission in charge of the ceremonies to be present and to make "a few appropriate remarks" at the dedication.

And not since that memorable day has there been a more auspicious time to recall those "appropriate remarks" than now.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate — we can not consecrate — we can not hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln.

November 19, 1863.

*Reproduced From a Copy of the "Gettysburg Address" Written by Abraham Lincoln Himself*